

## **APPENDIX A. OCTOBER 1, 2003, PUBLIC HEARING HANDOUTS**



# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project # RAM-060-B-507

October 1, 2003

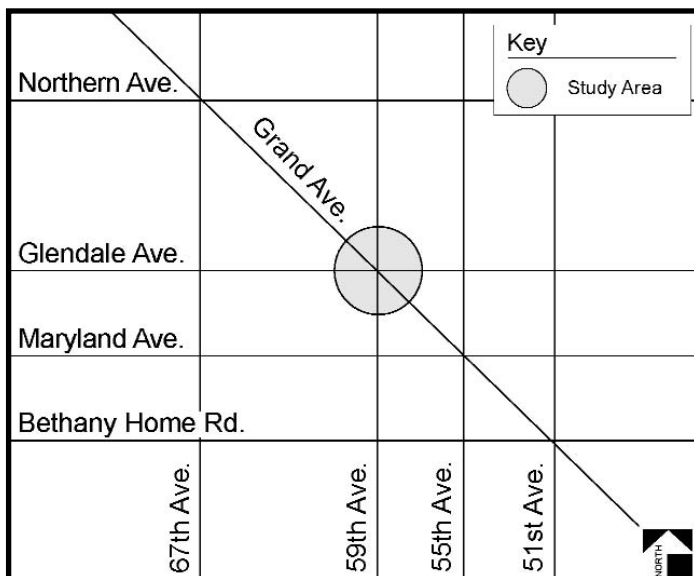
TRACS # 060 MA 155 H5610 01C

**WELCOME** to the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) public hearing for the proposed Grand Avenue Underpass at the intersection of 59<sup>th</sup> and Glendale Avenues. The primary purpose of tonight's hearing is to gather your comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). The Draft EA describes and quantifies the environmental impacts that may result from the construction of the proposed underpass.

There will be a short presentation tonight summarizing the project's background and describing the Preferred Alternative and its potential environmental consequences. After the presentation, we will have a brief question and answer session to respond to any general questions that you may have about the proposed improvements. After the question and answer session project team members, wearing nametags, will be available to answer any specific questions you may have.

We appreciate your attendance tonight and most importantly, value your input. A court reporter is here to record your verbal comments so that we can accurately document your input. Comment sheets are available to record your written comments. The court reporter will also document the presentation and the question and answer session.

The following information is a summary of the Draft EA and describes the project purpose and need,



Study Area Map

background, Preferred Alternative, and potential environmental consequences. Please see the Draft EA for more detailed information. A list of the project team members is also provided for your information.

## PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

Grand Avenue and the adjacent Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) provide a transportation corridor serving commercial and industrial businesses in the western Phoenix Metropolitan Area, while providing through-traffic mobility and local access to residences and commercial and retail businesses. The six-legged intersection formed by Grand Avenue, 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and Glendale Avenue causes average traffic delays of approximately 3 minutes (in the morning) to over 4 minutes (in the evening) during peak travel periods. Train activity can cause additional delays of up to 4 minutes for the motorists traveling along 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Glendale Avenue.

Commensurate with regional growth, traffic volumes are anticipated to rise, creating increased traffic delays and congestion, and projected peak hour traffic delays up to 9.5 minutes in 2025.

ADOT's objectives for this intersection are to improve the traffic operation (i.e., reduce intersection delay times and eliminate the six-legged intersection) while minimizing environmental impacts and right-of-way acquisition and limiting traffic restrictions during construction.

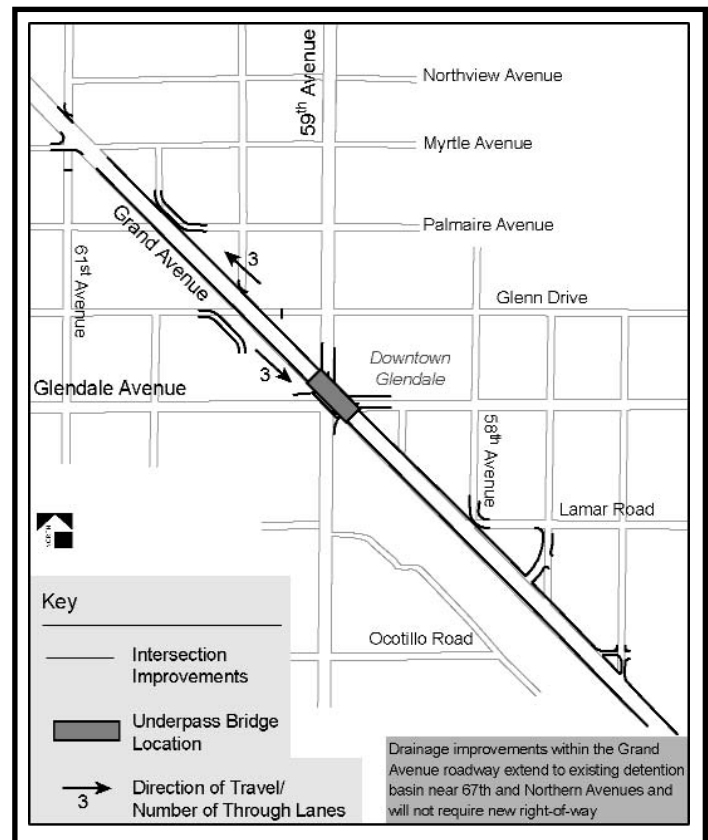
Removing Grand Avenue from the existing six-legged intersection by reconstructing it as a grade-separated underpass would improve:

- traffic flow on Grand Avenue;
- the traffic delays on the remaining intersection legs during morning and evening commuter periods by dropping the average traffic delays from approximately 4 minutes to 39 seconds in the morning and from approximately 5 minutes to under 1.5 minutes in the evening;
- the intersection's traffic capacity, which would in turn reduce congestion; and
- regional traffic flow throughout the Grand Avenue corridor.

# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

With the increased growth in surrounding communities, congestion on Grand Avenue has correspondingly worsened. Because of the increasing congestion, Grand Avenue has undergone a series of studies by federal, state, and local agencies over the past two decades to identify and examine improvement alternatives. In 1985, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) completed the *West Area Transportation Analyses*. This report analyzed the options of building a freeway along the corridor and/or building a grade-separated structure, which would reconfigure one of the roads at each six-legged intersection. In 1996, ADOT and MAG completed the *Grand Avenue Corridor Study*, and in 1999 ADOT initiated the *Grand Avenue Major Investment Study* (MIS). These studies evaluated and recommended transportation improvements for the Grand Avenue corridor. Improvement options were identified by a steering committee comprised of ADOT; the Cities of Glendale, Peoria, and Phoenix; MAG; Maricopa County; the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA); WESTMARC (a private association for businesses and development in the west valley); and BNSF. Public and stakeholder meetings were held to provide information about the MIS and gather additional input.



*Grand Avenue Underpass Alternative*

## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternatives for the 59<sup>th</sup>/Grand Avenue intersection were developed and evaluated during ADOT's Design Concept Study based on right-of-way, traffic/operation issues, and total vehicular delay. The Design Concept Study included efforts to minimize ground disturbance and right-of-way acquisition, reduce construction costs where feasible, and minimize impacts to motorists and pedestrians during construction.

The Draft EA evaluated three grade-separated alternatives in addition to the No Action Alternative. The MIS recommended that Grand Avenue be reconstructed as an underpass under 59<sup>th</sup> and Glendale Avenues. Two additional alternatives, both based on a grade-separated 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue, were evaluated as a result of public input obtained at the November 2, 2000, public meeting. All three grade-separation alternatives would eliminate the six-legged intersection by grade-separation of one roadway. The Grand Avenue Underpass, 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass, and 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass are described below.

**The Grand Avenue Underpass Alternative** would reconstruct Grand Avenue below the intersection of Glendale and 59<sup>th</sup> Avenues on, essentially, the existing alignment. Reconstructed Grand Avenue would consist of three lanes in each direction, consistent with the existing roadway configuration. The majority of the improvements would be between Ocotillo Road to just north of Myrtle Avenue, with drainage improvements installed along the existing Grand Avenue alignment extending to a detention basin near 67<sup>th</sup> and Northern Avenues. The Grand Avenue Underpass Alternative would reduce average morning and evening peak hour delays (in the year 2025) to 39 and 82 seconds per vehicle respectively, as compared to current delays of approximately 3 minutes in the morning and 4 minutes in the evening rush hours. The Grand Avenue Underpass Alternative was identified as the Preferred Alternative because it would substantially reduce traffic delay times, require less right-of way and commercial acquisitions than the other grade-separated alternatives, and would not require any residential relocations.

# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing

Because this alternative would reconstruct Grand Avenue below the intersection of Glendale and 59<sup>th</sup> Avenues, access to Grand Avenue from adjacent streets and to downtown Glendale would be provided along Myrtle Avenue and 57<sup>th</sup> Drive. Direct access from 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 58<sup>th</sup> Drive, Glenn Drive, 59<sup>th</sup> Drive, 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and Palmaire Avenue to Grand Avenue would be disconnected. Modified loop roads would connect several side roads, such as Glenn and 59<sup>th</sup> Drives. The Preferred Alternative would directly impact 8 commercial parcels, and would not result in any residential relocations; this alternative would cost approximately \$30 million to construct.

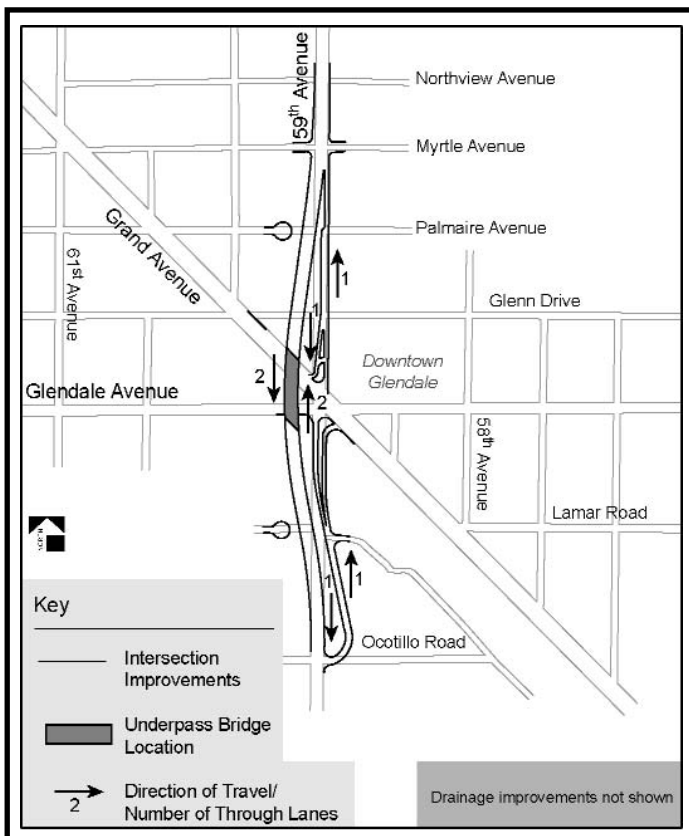
**A 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass Alternative** would reconstruct 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue under Grand Avenue, Glendale Avenue, and the railroad, slightly to the west of the existing road. The underpass would be a four-lane roadway (two lanes in each direction) extending from Ocotillo Road to just north of Myrtle Avenue. New connector roads would be constructed to provide local traffic circulation and access to remaining residences and businesses. Approximately 9.4 acres of new right-of-way would be required for construction of this alternative, directly impacting 16 commercial and 6 residential properties. The remaining Grand Avenue and Glendale



*59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass Alternative*

Avenue intersection would still result in average morning and evening peak hour traffic delays in the year 2025 of 104 seconds and 119 seconds respectively as compared to current delays of approximately 3 minutes in the morning and 4 minutes in the evening rush hours. This alternative would cost \$26 million to construct. The 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass Alternative was eliminated from further consideration because of the number of residential and commercial displacements, and the minimal improvement to traffic delays.

**A 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass Alternative** would construct 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue over Grand Avenue, Glendale Avenue, and the railroad, slightly to the west of the existing alignment. The overpass would be a four-lane roadway (two lanes in each direction) extending from Ocotillo Road to just north of Myrtle Avenue. New connector roads would be constructed to provide local traffic circulation and access to remaining residences and businesses. Approximately 11.1 acres of new right-of-way would be required for construction of this alternative, directly impacting 22 commercial properties and requiring acquisition of 6 residential properties. As with



*59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass Alternative*

# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing

the 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Underpass Alternative, the remaining Grand Avenue and Glendale Avenue intersection would still average morning and evening peak hour traffic delays (in the year 2025) of 104 seconds and 119 seconds respectively. This alternative would cost approximately \$23 million to construct. Of all the build alternatives, constructing 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue as an overpass would result in the most commercial property acquisitions: 6 more than a 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue underpass and 14 more than a Grand Avenue underpass. Because of the relatively poor improvement to traffic delays and magnitude of residential and commercial displacements, the 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue Overpass Alternative was eliminated from further consideration.



*Existing Intersection*

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Draft EA was prepared to evaluate the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed action. Copies of the Draft EA are available at the ADOT Environmental & Enhancement Group office, as well as the Velma Teague, Glendale Public, and Peoria Libraries.

The Draft EA considered the potential environmental issues associated with the proposed project, including the following:

- land use
- social and economic considerations
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act/Environmental Justice
- cultural resources
- air quality and noise impacts
- visual resources
- water resources
- hazardous materials

## Land Use

The study area contains lands owned by BNSF, ADOT, the City of Glendale, and private individuals. Existing land use includes residential, industrial, commercial, public (City of Glendale facilities), transportation, and vacant. The project area is located within the City of Glendale Downtown Redevelopment Area. The Preferred Alternative would require the acquisition of 3.3 acres of new right-of-way, requiring 8 commercial relocations. One residential property would be acquired, but this structure is vacant, uninhabitable, and previously condemned by the City of Glendale.

## Social and Economic Considerations

*Economic Analysis.* An economic impact analysis was completed for the project to estimate business losses that could occur in the project area due to the disruption of traffic flow during construction, post-construction traffic flow, and/or vehicular access. Projected losses were divided into two categories: losses due to customers avoiding the area and losses due to businesses that may close or relocate.

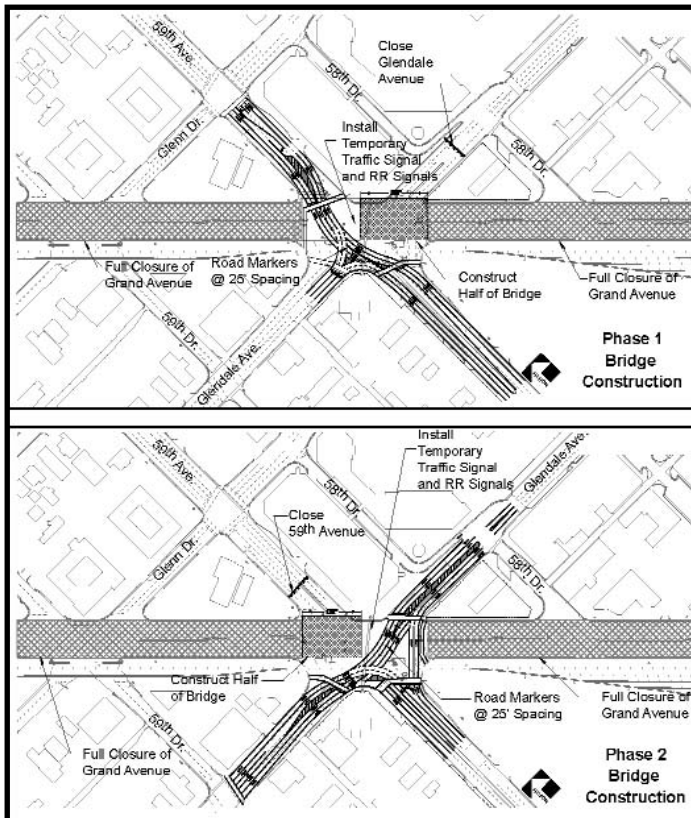
The economic impact analysis indicated that construction activity is expected to result in short-term overall reduction in business activity in the downtown area, as customers avoid the inconvenience associated with construction. This short-term business activity loss associated with customer avoidance is projected to be potentially between \$3.7 and \$4.1 million in total revenue, resulting in a corresponding reduction of city sales tax revenue. Any sales tax revenue losses are expected to end within 3 years after construction ends.

In response to, or in anticipation of, the projected revenue loss, the number of short-term business closures/relocations projected to occur as a result of the Preferred Alternative potentially ranges from 18 to 22 businesses. The loss of these businesses is anticipated to result in a corresponding reduction of city sales tax revenue. Within 3 years after the completion of construction, closed/relocated businesses are expected to be replaced. At the end of this period, the downtown area is expected to fully recover its business base and generated revenue.

The economic impact analysis also noted that potential benefits may be associated with the proposed improvements. These include increased opportunities to develop/redevelop the west side of Grand Avenue by simplifying the intersection and making the west side more accessible to downtown Glendale.



# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing



*Traffic Diversions During Bridge Construction*

To minimize the economic effects of the Preferred Alternative, the following mitigation measures would be implemented:

- The public would be provided a minimum of 14 calendar days of advance notice of construction activities.
- The ADOT's Phoenix Construction and Community Relations Offices would coordinate with the City of Glendale to ensure media coverage of construction activities using citywide media.
- The contractor would place directional signs on alternate routes to Downtown Glendale.
- Full one-way and two-way closures of 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Glendale Avenue would be scheduled to occur between February 15 and November 15 to minimize disruption to downtown Glendale during the holiday season.
- Preconstruction meetings would be scheduled with the downtown Glendale business community to inform it of the construction sequencing and road closures.

*Neighborhood Continuity and Emergency Services.* The improvements would result in a simpler intersection configuration, potentially improving the flow of

pedestrians and motorists between the northeast and southwest sides of Grand Avenue. Because the full closures associated with the proposed construction would affect emergency services, ADOT would coordinate with the City of Glendale Fire and Police Chiefs prior to and during construction.

*Access and Traffic Patterns.* Impacts to bus services would occur as a result of the proposed project. Existing RPTA bus service in the project area includes the Yellow Line, Route 24, Route 25, Route 70, and the Glendale urban shuttle. RPTA, in conjunction with the cities of Phoenix, Glendale, and Peoria, is currently proposing to eliminate the Yellow Line. If the Yellow Line is not eliminated by RPTA, the grade-separation of Grand Avenue may permanently disconnect the Yellow Line from other routes that service the project area. Prior to construction, ADOT would coordinate with the RPTA to address relocation of any impacted bus routes.

The Preferred Alternative is anticipated to take approximately one year to construct, and would require alternative routes around the proposed improvements. Grand Avenue would be closed to all traffic between Myrtle Avenue and 57<sup>th</sup> Drive; traffic would be diverted onto Myrtle or 56<sup>th</sup> Avenues for most of the construction period. Regional traffic would be diverted around the project area via Loop 101 and Interstate 10, and area traffic would be routed along other arterial streets. Two phases of construction at the bridge at 59<sup>th</sup> and Glendale Avenues would occur: in Phase I, through traffic would be maintained along 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue (but diverted slightly to the west); in Phase II, through traffic would be maintained along Glendale Avenue (diverted slightly to the south). At the request of the City, no specific detour routes would be signed for local street closures. Any detours would be coordinated with adjacent projects to minimize conflicts and, with the exception of Grand Avenue, no full road closures would be permitted between November 15 and February 15.

After construction of the Preferred Alternative, traffic on Grand Avenue would be required to use Myrtle Avenue or 57<sup>th</sup> Drive to access downtown Glendale. Some out of direction travel (less than 1 mile) would be required to access local streets.

## **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act/Environmental Justice**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes (including state-level ADOT Environmental Justice Guidance), ensure that individuals are not

# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing



*Simulation Photo and Detail  
of the Preferred Alternative*

excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Executive Order 12898 directs that programs, policies, and activities not have a disproportionately high and adverse human health and effect on minority and low-income populations.

A review of census data resulted in the identification of a high percentage of Hispanics, elderly individuals, and low-income households in the project vicinity. Based on the potential for the proposed improvements to displace protected population-related businesses or impact protected population employees and customers, a one-on-one survey of owners and managers of study area businesses was undertaken. The surveyors inquired about owners/managers, employees, and customers. Based on the mixed range of responses to survey questionnaires, no district protected population group was identified. Therefore no disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations could be reasonably expected.

## **Cultural Resources**

The study area has been investigated for the presence of cultural resources by a variety of archaeological

and historic property surveys. Four properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places were identified within or adjacent to the study area: the First National Bank of Glendale and three properties within the Catlin Court Historic District. A retaining wall would encroach on the parcel that contains the First National Bank of Glendale, but there would be no direct impact to the structure. The retaining wall would not compromise the architecturally significant front face of the building. After consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, it was determined that no historic properties would be adversely affected by the proposed project.

## **Air Quality**

The proposed project is located in the Phoenix carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) nonattainment areas. An air quality assessment was completed for the proposed project to compare the existing CO concentrations to projected concentrations in the year 2025, with and without the construction of the Preferred Alternative. The assessment focused on CO levels because impacts to CO are assessed as a project-level impact, whereas impacts to PM<sub>10</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> are regional conditions. The assessment projected that CO concentrations in 2025 with the implementation of the proposed improvements would

# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing

be lower than both current levels and those in the year 2025 if the project was not constructed. Short-term impacts to CO and PM<sub>10</sub> levels could occur during construction because of the interruption of normal traffic flow and the dust that may become airborne during construction. By implementing an effective traffic control plan and using watering and other dust control measures, these short-term impacts would be reduced.

## Noise

The projected impacts of traffic noise from construction of the Preferred Alternative were analyzed to identify areas that may be considered for mitigation, in accordance with the ADOT Noise Abatement Policy. Noise measurements were taken at 38 receiver sites distributed throughout the project area; these sites were chosen because of their residential land use and proximity to the proposed improvements. As a result of the proposed improvements noise levels at six receivers would exceed the ADOT threshold for mitigation consideration. In accordance with ADOT's Noise Abatement Policy, no mitigation was recommended because these six receivers are:

- sites where the receiver is considered an isolated receiver site (1 or 2 sites set apart from other sensitive sites);
- sites where noise is generated from traffic along roads not modified by the proposed improvements; and
- sites where the outdoor use areas are already shielded from noise.

## Visual Resources

The existing visual character of the study area is dominated by commercial land uses. Prominent built features within the study area include commercial development, the BNSF track, traffic and street lighting, and billboards. Overall, the visual character of the study area would not substantially change because the proposed improvements would be below ground level.

## Water Resource Considerations

Portions of the study area are located within a designated 100-year floodplain. The Preferred Alternative would require the removal of fill material within portions of the 100-year floodplain in order to construct the underpass. A pump would be constructed at the southwest corner of 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Glenn Drive to remove storm water that collects in the underpass. Approximately 7,600 feet of pipe would be installed, primarily along Grand Avenue to convey

water to an existing detention basin near the intersection of 67<sup>th</sup> and Northern Avenues. Additionally, short pipe segments will be installed along local surface streets (e.g., 59<sup>th</sup> Drive and 59<sup>th</sup> and Palmar Avenue). During this installation, travel lanes may be temporarily restricted. Installation on Palmar Avenue is anticipated to require a full closure of portions of this roadway.

Because the proposed study would include features to contain and/or maintain existing drainage patterns and minimize pooling, the Preferred Alternative would have no substantial impacts on the existing floodplain or surface water flows. Also, a large pump station will be used to substantially reduce flooding at the intersection of 59<sup>th</sup> and Glendale Avenues and the surrounding streets.

## Hazardous Materials

An assessment was conducted to determine the presence of hazardous materials within the study limits. The assessment included a site visit, review of applicable federal and state records, and a review of aerial photographs. Eight parcels within the study area were identified as requiring further hazardous materials investigation prior to right-of-way acquisition. ADOT would complete all necessary hazardous materials investigations/remediation prior to purchasing new right-of-way.

## PROJECT TEAM

ADOT and consultant representatives are available tonight to discuss the proposed improvements and answer questions. Representatives from the Project Team are wearing nametags so that you can easily recognize them. Trent Kelso is ADOT's Project Manager from Valley Project Management and Larry Lindner is the Environmental Planner from ADOT's Environmental & Enhancement Group. Pete Eno, a representative from ADOT's Right of Way Group, Fred Garcia, Air & Noise Specialist, and Ed Green, ADOT's Hazardous Materials Coordinator, are also present tonight. Assisting ADOT with the engineering effort is Michael Baker Jr., Inc. with Anthony Pisano serving as its Project Manager. Linda Simone Grafil with Logan Simpson Design Inc. is responsible for the EA. Bob Coons is the City of Glendale's Project Manager.





# Grand Avenue: 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Glendale Avenue Public Hearing

## YOUR INPUT

The primary objective of the hearing tonight is to obtain your input on the findings of the Draft EA. Please take the time to put your comments in writing on the comment sheet or provide your comments to the court reporter. You may leave your comments with us tonight or send them to us by October 16, 2003. A copy of the comment sheet is also on the [grandavenuecorridor.com](http://grandavenuecorridor.com) Web site. Please submit your comments to:

Michael Book  
Logan Simpson Design Inc.  
51 West Third Street, Suite 450  
Tempe, Arizona 85281

Fax: (480) 966-9232  
E-mail: [mbook@lsdaz.com](mailto:mbook@lsdaz.com)

**NOTES:**

[illegible]